Belle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.
Pocahontas County
Dec 27, 1940

Chapter 6 - Section 1

From Mr. George Clendenen I secured this old copy of:

MINUTES

of the

LEWISBURG DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Baltimore Conference

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH,

Held in

Hillsboro', Pocahontas County, W. Va.

September 20-23, 1871

This Conference was held in the Wesley Chapel Church located on the hill beside the parsonage.

John L. Gilbert, Presiding Elder ---- P. O. Lewisburg, W. Va.

Members from Pocahontas County:

Clerical Members	Appointment	Post Office
Charles W. Joyce	Levelton	Academy, Pocahontas Co.
J. Hembert Smith	"	" " "
James B. Moore L.P.	"	Edray, " "
Shannon F. Butt		Greenbank " "

Lay Delegates		
Joseph Beard	"	
Joel Hill	"	Academy " "
Isaac Moore		" " "
James Moore	Greenbank	Greenbank, " "
	Greenbank	Frost, " "

PROCEEDINGS

of the

LEWISBURG DISTRICT CONFERENCE

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First Day.

The District Cinference for the Lewisburg District, Baltimore Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church South, commenced its session in the Southern Methodist Church in Hillsboro, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, September 20th, 1871, at 9 o'clock A.M.

Rev. John L. Gilbert, Presiding Elder of the District, and President of the Conference, opened the Conference with reading the Scriptures, singing and prayer.

After some remarks by the President explanatory of the object of the meeting, on motion Rev. Lewis Lynch was elected Secretary, and Rev. Frazier Purr, Assistant Secretary.

The roll of the Conference was called and the following members answered to their names:

Clerical: John L. Gilbert, C. A. Joyce, J. R. Smith, J. E. Moore, Joseph Crickenberger, Frazier Purr, Jehu Hank, W. T. Quinn, C. E. Beauchamps, J. F. Clark, W. L. Lynch.

Lay: Joseph Beard, Joel Hill, Levi Buckley, H. G. Brown.

The hours for daily meeting were fixed at 9 o'clock A.M. and 3 P.M., and for adjournment at 11 o'clock A.M. and 5 o'clock P.M.

On motion the President was requested to appoint the Committees as at the last annual session.

The bar of the Conference was fixed, and members were requested to take their seats within the bar.

The receiving of oral reports as to the General interests of the Church in the different appointments was taken up, and Levelton Circuit was represented by Rev. C. A. Joyce, Rev. J. R. Smith and Rev. J. E. Moore.

Conference adjourned for preaching.

First Day --------- Afternoon Session

Wednesday, September 20, 1871

The President announded the following Committees:

Committee on Spiritual Interests of the Church:

Rev. Eugene R. Smith, Rev. Frazier Burr, Joel Hill.

Committee on Sunday Schools:

Rev. Charles A. Joyce, Rev. Charles E. Beauchamp, E. G. Brown.

Committee on Finance:

Rev. James F. Clark, Rev. W. L. Lynch, Joseph Beard.

Committee on Education:

Rev. Wm. T. Quinn, Rev. J. R. Smith, George Law.

Committee on Church and Parsonage Building:

Rev. Joseph Crickenberger, Rev. W. L. Lynch, Abram Beard.

Committee on Missions:

Rev. W. L. Lynch, Rev. Joseph Crickenberger, Levi Coakley.

Committee on Temperance:

Committee on Memoirs:

Rev. S. B. Dolly, Rev. J. Crickenberger, Rev. F. Furr.

On motion, the President of the Conference, and the preacher in charge of the Levelton Circuit were appointed the Committee of Public Worship.

Third Day ------- Morning Session

Report of the Committee on Spiritual Interests:

Your Committee on the Spiritual Interests of the Church in the Lewisburg District, respectfully submit the following report:

We have been gratified to learn from the representations made from the different charges, that there is an increased interest manifested by our people in the social meetings of the Church, and at the same time are obliged to deplore that they do not receive that attention which their importance demands.

Our Church, originating in a desire for the promotion of personal piety, and with special and peculiar means of grace best calculated to accomplish this, we have a right to expect that Methodists should be better than the members of other Churches.

Sometimes it is the case that in our zeal for the conversion of sinners and the increase of our membership, we neglect and fail to properly care for those, who are really members of the Church. We find it difficult to act upon what we

acknowledge to be true, that the prosperity of a church depends much more upon the holiness, than upon the numbers and wealth of its members. We need especially to organize prayer-meetings and class-meetings where these do not already exist, and endeavor to persuade our membership to attend.

The objections urged against class-meetings frequently arise from a misconception of their design, and the lack of qualified leaders. The class meeting is not a confessional where past sins are acknowledged and absolution given, but a place where the present spiritual condition is described, that proper counsel may be received, and where the surroundings are calculated to produce a determination to continued faithfulness and a greater devotion in the Christian life. Now that attendance upon class-meetings is no longer a test of membership, more care is necessary in the selection of leaders, and greater effort is required to make the meetings attractive. If the classes are organized during a season of revival, the members urged to attend, the formality usually incident to them as far as possible avoided, and variety observed in conducting them, we may yet see them well attended and becoming a greater blessing than ever before.

Family religion is also an important means of grace which is much neglected. Family prayer, daily observed, has often been blessed to the conversion of the children and the increase in spirituality of every member of the household. Let us by precept and example, by private as well as public

The more frequent preaching by our preachers of the distinctive doctrines of our Church would probably exert a very beneficial effect upon the spiritual interests of our membership and congregations.

Much depends upon the prudence and faithfulness of the ministry. Methodist means of grace faithfully used, Methodist theology faithfully preached, the Discipline of the Church faithfully enforced, and the old fires of religious fervor will be rekindled, the ancient glory rest upon our people, and we shall again hear it said " Methodism is Christianity in earnest."

Eugene R. Smith
Frazier Purr
Joel Hill

Third Day ----------Afternoon Session

The Committee on Education made the following report:

We, your Committee on Education, beg leave to report, that from the statements made by the members of this body in representing the various charges of the District, we are convinced that there is not attention given to the subject of Education which its importance demands.

Education is recognised by all as among the most potent of moral agencies. Its humanising effects are felt and seen wherever its beneficial influences are experienced, in elevating man in his social capacities, and preparing his heart for the reception of those great truths which will make him "wise unto salvation".

We are convinced that the time has come in the history of our Church when we not only require an educated

ministry, but an educated membership is equally demanded, to advance her general interests and carry to a successful issue her grand design - the salvation of souls. We believe that the great difficulty of obtaining suitable persons to hold official relations to the church, and especially to conduct our Sunday Schools, is due more to the want of education than any other cause that can be assigned.

We would therefore recommend:

1. That we, as members of this Conference, urge upon all our people the importance of educating their children.

2. That in their education we recommend them to patronise the institutions of our own Church as far as practicable, and

3. We would especially recommend to their favor and patronage Randolph Macon College, Preston and Clin Institute, Wesleyan Female Institute at Staunton, and Montgomery Female College at Christiansburg, as worthy of their confidence and support.

Wm. F. Quinn
George Law
James R. Smith

The Committee on Church and Parsonage Building made the following report, which was read and adopted:

Your Committee beg leave to submit the following report:

After gathering all the information we can, we are more than ever impressed with the fact that as a Church, we are

very deficient in respect to Church and Parsonage building. We feel satisfied that if proper efforts are made more Churches and Parsonages can be speedily erected. All that is necessary is to bring the matter fully before our people.

We learn from the report of the preachers that there are but three parsonages owned by us for the use of our preachers within the District, one at Hillsboro', another at Centreville, and the District parsonage at Lewisburg. Brethren, this ought not so to be.

We are gratified to learn that there is a very neat church being erected at the Big Bend Tunnel, and that several others are in contemplation and will be built as soon as circumstances will permit.

Brethren, let us awake to the interests of our beloved Zion, and urge our people to the erection of churches and parsonages all over the District.

We would recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1st. That it is of importance to the spiritual interests of every charge to have a church large enough to admit of some growth in the congregation, and of such a construction as to be comfortable in winter as well as summer, and sufficiently neat as to inspire respect for our holy religion.

2nd. That it is essential to our permanent prosperity as a Church that every circuit and station, as well as the District, have a comfortable home for its preacher.

3rd. That we urge all the Quarterly Conferences to supply their charges with the necessary furniture, especially the heavy household furniture needed by the preachers.

4th. That we will endeavor to secure the speedy collection of the amount which was assessed by the District Stewards as necessary for the repairing and furnishing the District Parsonage at Lewisburg.

Joseph Crickenberger
W. Lewis Lynch
Abram Beard

Your Committee on Finance submit the following report:

We are deeply impressed with importance of the subject under consideration, especially after a careful review of the financial interests of our District.

We have a membership of near two thousand, to whom are committed fifteen ministers of the Gospel and their families, with an allowance for the whole of five thousand one hundred dollars. Of this amount only about $1253 has been paid, not one-fourth of the claim, although more than one-half of the year has passed. This being a fact, there is no doubt but that some of our brethren have been in straitened circumstances, and may have suffered from actual need.

Truly this is a lamentable state of affairs. But seeing the effects, the question arises, what is the cause? If we can find the cause, the remedy will be easy. Are our people to bear the blame? Are they to be censured for their great deficiency? Are we doing them justice by suffering

such a report to be brought to this District? It is the opinion of your Committee that a qualified answer to these questions may be given in the negative; qualified in this, that our people are not educated fully as to their duty in this matter. We fear the idea prevails in the minds of many of our people that the minister is an object of charity, and therefore feel at liberty to give, as they term it, whatever they may be disposed.

They are also impressed with the fact that the progress of the Church is retarded in all of its interests by the inefficiency of our financial system, and that the inefficiency is due to a great extent to the fact that our ministers have failed to properly instruct the people.

In view of these considerations we respectfully submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That we as ministers use every effort in our power to instruct our people in this matter, and make them feel this to be a duty, and that upon it depends not only the success of the Church, but the development of an essential Christian grace in the character.

James F. Clark
Joseph Beard
W. L. Lynch

The report of the Committee on Publishing Interests was received, read and adopted.

The report is as follows:

The Press is, without controversy, a powerful auxiliary to the pulpit in forwarding the interests of the Redeemer's

kingdom.

Methodism in the past has not been unmindful of this fact, for her eventful history teaches that in her advancement to the proportions of a vast moral empire, no small amount of said pregression is due from the diligent circulation of her Church literature. But we have fallen upon evil times in this respect, and judging from the reports of the preachers representing the various charges, there is a delinquency existing throughout the bounds of this District relative to the circulation of our own books and periodicals, which is deplorable and alarming.

Among various publications, we recommend the following:

The History of the Organization of the M.E. Church South, by Dr. Redford, meets a felt want, and we urge its circulation.

The Nashville Christian Advocate we cordially recommend, because it is the official Organ of our Church, and because of its decidedly Methodistic tone.

We feel deeply interested in the continuance of a weekly religious journal within our bounds, and recommend the Baltimore Episcopal Methodist, as worthy of the patronage of our people.

The St. Louis Christian Advocate is a large sheet, ably edited, and we recommend it to our people.

The Quarterly Review, adopted by the General Conference edited by Dr. Bledsoe, and now published in St. Louis, is a periodical standing in the foremost rank of its class. We cordially recommend it to our people, and especially to the

ministry, that they may store their minds with thoughts pertaining to the spirit of the age.

The New Monthly Magazine, edited by Mr. Harrison, according to the provision of the General Conference, we regard as a timely periodical, believing that its extensive circulation will be effective in counteracting the pernicious influences of secular monthlies.

We call special attention to our Sunday School literature, cordially recommending and urging its circulation.

We also recommend the "Hand-Book of the Baltimore Conference", by Rev. E. R. Smith, as a work calculated to promote the interests of our Church.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Frazier Furr
James E. Moore
Joseph Beard

On motion, Rev. E. R. Smith and Rev. W. L. Lynch were appointed a Committee to have the minutes of the District Conference published, and the members of the Conference pledged themselves to raise the amount necessary to pay for the same when said amount is apportioned by the Committee.

The following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the members of the Conference are due to and are hereby tendered to the citizens of this community for their hospitable and sumptuous entertainment.